



Centenary Handbook
for
**Sunday School
Workers**

**The Board of Sunday Schools
of the
Methodist Episcopal Church**

58 East Washington Street, Chicago, Ill.



Centenary Handbook for Sunday School Workers

What is the Centenary?

The Centenary marks the close of the first century of Methodist Missions. The Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in 1819. And in 1919, by order of the General Conference of 1916, the hundredth anniversary of that epoch-making event is to be celebrated in a way worthy of the present world-situation. Instead of merely glorifying an historic past, the Centenary summons the Church to a far more adequate program for the future.*

The Centenary Challenge to the Sunday School.

As the woodsman seizes the time of high water to float away in a few days great piles of timber which it would ordinarily require months to move, so wise and alert Sunday School workers will grasp

* See free leaflet, *What is the Centenary?*

the opportunity of the Centenary to do in a few years an effective piece of missionary education which would otherwise demand decades. The world has become a neighborhood; but the neighbors are not brothers. It is the task of the Christian Church to make brothers of men. The Church of tomorrow is the Sunday School of today. If we would have a dominantly missionary Church in the next quarter-century, we must begin with the boys and girls in our Sunday Schools and teach them the full meaning of world-brotherhood.*

The Sunday School's Financial Share

Careful surveys have shown that it will require \$80,000,000 to put our Church's world-enterprise on an efficiency footing. The Sunday School is to raise one-eighth of that total, or \$10,000,000, to be given at the rate of \$2,000,000 a year for the five years of the campaign.

* See free leaflet, *The Challenge of the Centenary to the Sunday School*.

The Resources of the Sunday School

At first blush, this may seem a very heavy responsibility for the Sunday School. But there are 4,679,943 members in our 36,302 schools. One cent a week from each pupil, excluding the Cradle Roll, would make a total of \$2,252,365.96 per year.

There is no question as to whether the resources of the Sunday School are adequate for this task. Recent events have proved that the Sunday School will "face up" to any worthy challenge, once it has been put squarely before the members. On Patriotic Sunday (1917), our Sunday Schools were asked for a special offering of \$100,000 for the American Red Cross. They responded with a generous gift of \$148,000! At Christmas time (1917), they were approached for an offering for Armenian and Syrian Relief, and less than 7,000 schools gave a total of \$210,000! These two special offerings aggregated \$358,000; and yet during that same year the

regular missionary gift from the Sunday School was increased from \$676,230 (1916) to \$696,004 (1917).

It is evident that our Sunday Schools have a wealth of resources which will be turned into missionary channels when missionary needs and opportunities are properly presented to them. Many Sunday School pupils are wage-earners, and others have allowances, so that we need not hesitate to put our missionary requests upon a dignified and challenging basis.

Centenary Objectives for the Local School

The Centenary plan for the Sunday School includes all of the various phases of missionary education. The following features are of paramount importance:

I. ORGANIZATION

The Sunday School organized into a missionary society, headed by missionary superintendent and representative committee. (*)

(*) See free leaflet, *Efficient Missionary Organization in the Sunday School*.

II. INSTRUCTION

Adequate missionary instruction, based on the monthly Centenary programs. ¹

III. GIVING ²

(1) Acceptance of Centenary quota by the local Sunday School Board;

(2) An every member canvass for missions within the school;

(3) Regular missionary offering, on a weekly basis if possible, through the use of the Centenary envelopes.

IV. PRAYER ³

Consistent training in intercessory prayer.

V. SERVICE ⁴

A graded program of service-activities.

Methods and Materials.

I. ORGANIZATION

According to the law of our Church, it is the duty of the pastor "to see that each Sunday School on his pastoral charge is organized into a Missionary Society" (Discipline, Paragraph 428 Section 5).

(1) See catalogue of Centenary material for Sunday Schools.

(2) See free leaflet, *Training in Giving*.

(3) See free leaflet, *Training in Prayer*.

(4) See free leaflet, *Training in Service*.

Too many *organizations* and too little *organization* have made for inefficiency in our church enterprises. If the Centenary is to mean anything vital in the life of a Sunday School, there must be in that school some person who will assume responsibility for the various phases of the campaign.

That person is logically the missionary superintendent. Assisting the missionary superintendent, there must be a wide-awake committee, including representatives from each department in the school. This missionary committee is specifically charged with the success of the Centenary campaign in the Sunday School, and must supervise all its features. From this committee will be elected those persons who shall represent the Sunday School on the Local Church Centenary Council. For detailed suggestions on organizing the Sunday School for its Centenary task, consult the free leaflet, *Efficient Missionary Organization in the Sunday School*.

II. INSTRUCTION

Here is the keystone of the arch. Unless our Sunday School members *know* about the Church's world task, how can they be expected to pray for it intelligently, or to work for it vigorously, or to give for it generously?

The instruction of Sunday School pupils on missionary subjects take the following general forms:

- (1) In the Sunday School session:
 - (a) The monthly missionary program.

The law of our Church requires that a missionary program shall be given in the Sunday School each month. This program usually takes the time of the opening worship service, that is, from fifteen to twenty minutes. Rightly handled, the monthly missionary program is the most effective means at our disposal for bringing the Church's World Program vividly before the pupils. A weekly program is, of course, better still, but few schools are ready to adopt so ideal a plan.

To insure the most effective use of the time devoted to the monthly missionary presentation, the Board of Sunday Schools has provided several series of graded Centenary programs. The programs for use from September through December deal with out-

standing home missionary problems; those for use from January through June deal with important foreign missionary subjects.

The Centenary programs are graded as follows:

Series I. For Young People's and Adult Departments. (Also for use in the one-room school.)

Series II. For Intermediate and Senior Departments.

Series III. For Junior Departments.

Series IV. For Primary Departments, with suggestions for superintendents of Beginners' Departments.

These programs may be secured from the Board of Sunday Schools at five cents the series, postpaid. (See Catalogue.)

(b) In the class session.

The importance of the teacher in creating and maintaining a missionary atmosphere cannot be over-estimated. It is to be hoped that all Sunday School teachers will adopt the plan of making *every lesson a missionary lesson*. Any lesson becomes a missionary lesson when it is interpreted in terms of helpfulness and unselfish service to others. To train Sunday School pupils to know the equation "Christian = missionary" is to build a firm foundation for tomorrow's missionary Church.

Abundant helps in the way of leaflets and books are available for the teacher who desires to train his pupils in prayer, service, and giving. A complete list of these is given in the catalogue.

(2) Week-day mission study:

Two official Centenary books have been written for use in mission study classes, or for individual reading.

Christian Democracy for America, by Dr. D. D. Forsyth and Dr. R. W. Keeler, is the book on Methodist Home Missions.

The Christian Crusade for World Democracy, by Dr. S. Earl Taylor and Mr. Halford Luccock, is on Methodist Foreign Missions. These books ought to be read by every member of the Senior, Young People's, and Adult Departments.

For Intermediates, Mrs. Brummitt's *Brother Van* will prove extremely interesting. It is another "Pathfinder" story, and tells of our pioneer Methodist preacher in Montana, Rev. W. W. Van Orsdell.

For Juniors, there is Mrs. Fahs' captivating book, *Red, Yellow, and Black*. It contains stories of several outstanding missionary personalities whom all Juniors ought to know.

For Primary pupils, Miss Colson's *Friends of Ours* will be found most effective.

NOTE.—A very carefully compiled

list of books, leaflets, and lantern slides for Sunday School use during the Centenary campaign may be found in the *Catalogue of Centenary Material for The Sunday School*.

III. GIVING

(1) *Acceptance of Centenary quota by the local Sunday School Board.*

The Sunday School Centenary quota is one-eighth of the Centenary quota (or allotment) for the local church. That is, if the church receives an allotment of \$1600, it is understood that the Sunday School connected with that church is to raise one-eighth of that amount, or \$200.

A minimum offering, however, of one cent per week per member is asked of every school even though the quota as determined by the above method is less than that. Accordingly, if the Sunday School just mentioned has a membership of 500, its Centenary goal ought to be at least \$260 (one cent per week per member) instead of the quota of \$200 (one-eighth of the local church quota.)

It is imperative that each school have a definite financial goal. The Centenary quota is determined with the greatest care that it may be fair to every school. It should be acted upon by the Sunday School Board at the earliest possible opportunity. Once accepted, it should be made known to the pupils as their share in Methodism's world-enterprise. Frequent reports should be made as to progress to date in raising the quota, as to what the money is doing, etc. As one Sunday School superintendent said, "There must be something doing along the line of missions all the time" if a school is to meet its Centenary obligations.

NOTE.—(1) Where the district has adopted a World Parish, it is assumed that the Sunday School missionary offering is to be applied directly thereon.

(2) Where there is no World Parish, the Sunday School missionary offering

(a) should be divided according to the Disciplinary ratio: 45% to the Board of Foreign Missions; 45% to the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension; and 10% to the Board of Sunday Schools; or

(b) if more than \$100, may be designated toward some special object in home or foreign field.

In the case of (1), reports on the work being done in the World Parish will be sent to the Sunday Schools participating.

In the case of (2), leaflet literature will be supplied, showing what various sums of money will accomplish in different mission fields.

(2) *An every member canvass for missions within the school.*

This Centenary task is not for Gideon's band of the faithful; *every member* must be won to participation.

A special Centenary program, and four beautifully illustrated and carefully graded leaflets are provided for the purpose of making the every member canvass a success. Choose a Sunday for the every member canvass and advertise it as *Centenary Sunday* or *Kingdom Sunday*. Use the time of the opening service for the special Centenary program. In a brief yet vivid way, this program states the Centenary chal-

lenge to the Sunday School. Then the illustrated leaflets are distributed: *Friends of Ours* is given to the little folks in the Beginners' and Primary Departments; *Future World Citizens* is given to the Juniors; *A World-Wide work* is given to Intermediates and Seniors; while *Making Jesus Known* is given to the members of the Adult Department. Then the classes go into session. After prayer, the teacher comments briefly on the Centenary program to which the pupils have just listened, and then reads the illustrated leaflet with them. When they reach the bottom of the fourth page, where the invitation appears for each member to bring a weekly offering, the teacher distributes pledge cards, and asks the pupils to set a goal for their individual gifts. Sometimes pupils will prefer to keep the pledge card for a week, to consider the matter at greater length, or to consult with parents. The Centenary envelopes are given to the pupils when they hand the signed pledge cards to the teacher.

In most cases, it is best to conduct the every member canvass through the class as a unit. The class will desire to set its own financial goal, which would be the sum of the pledges of all its members. The class treasurer, or a specially appointed committee, must urge a very consistent follow-up campaign to make sure that every member is participating.

For additional instructions regarding the every member canvass for missions, see the special *Centenary Program*.

(3) *Regular missionary offering, on a weekly basis if possible, through the use of the Centenary envelopes.*

Aside from its educational value, regularity in making offerings is absolutely essential if the school is to reach its Centenary quota. If it is at all possible, a weekly missionary offering should take the place of the former monthly offering. We ought to train our boys and girls to give for the work of the Church in the larger world every time they give for the local church or Sunday School. There are, of

course, some schools where the Centenary goal can best be attained by retaining the old-time monthly plan. But for a majority of schools, nothing less than the adoption of a weekly plan of missionary giving will meet the Centenary requirements.

The Centenary envelope (provided at ten cents the hundred, postpaid) should be used in every school where the Duplex or other divided envelope is not already employed.

Our giving goal is: *Every member giving, regularly, intelligently, prayerfully, and with a definite goal.*

For fuller discussion of missionary giving in the Sunday School, see the free leaflet, *Training in Giving*.

IV. PRAYER

A definite effort must be made to train our boys and girls in regular habits of prayer for particular fields, for individual missionaries, and for the success of missionary plans at home and abroad. They must be taught to pray, not easy blanket prayers like

"Lord, bless Africa," but rather the rugged sort of intercession which petitions "Lord, bless Africa *through me*; help me to know her problems and to love her people; help me, Lord, to help Africa!"

For suggestions on developing the prayer life of Sunday School pupils, see the free leaflet, *Training in Prayer*.

V. SERVICE

We best learn by doing. We keep an impression by giving expression to it. We should train missionary-minded youth in doing missionary-minded activities. A graded program of service-activities is a most important and integral part of missionary education in the Sunday School. As a part of our Sunday School Centenary plans, we must bring the pupils in the local school into vital forms of service for others, thus training them for larger participation as they advance in years. Our boys and girls must be trained for future service by present serving.

Service-activities for Sunday School pupils are discussed in the free leaflet, *Training in Service*.

The Agents of the Plan.

Every field worker who has occasion to present the Centenary from the platform, should consider himself a representative of the Board of Sunday Schools.

In the district, the District Superintendent is the key man. Assisting him is the district counselor, who has charge of the missionary education plans in the district. In many cases there will also be sub-district group leaders.

In the local school, the pastor, the Sunday School superintendent, and the missionary superintendent are the persons responsible for putting the plan into operation. As the first prerequisite of efficiency, every school should be organized as a missionary society for missionary instruction and for training in prayer, service, and giving. (This includes the election of a missionary superintendent and of a representative missionary committee. The name of the missionary superintendent should be listed with the Board of Sunday Schools, so that the regular helps and sugges-

tions may be received without fail.)

The failure of any one link in the chain weakens the entire program for a district.

*Every Centenary Worker a
Sunday School Worker.*

Since the Sunday School plans represent a vital part of the general Centenary propaganda, it is important that every Centenary worker should feel his responsibility for their success. Not only does the success of the Centenary depend upon the way in which the Sunday School handles the portion assigned to it, but the attitude of the Church of the future toward the missionary program will be, to an important extent, determined in the Sunday School during the Centenary years.

More detailed information concerning Sunday School Centenary plans will gladly be furnished upon request. Write to

The Board of Sunday Schools
of the
Methodist Episcopal Church,
58 East Washington Street,
Chicago, Illinois







